



Town of North Hempstead

Recycle the Rain

Rain Barrel Installation and Maintenance



Supervisor Jon Kaiman

What you will get:

Rain barrel kit (rain barrel, spigot, and screen)

Optional/recommended accessories:

Concrete blocks for the rain barrel to sit on

Standard or soaker hose

Tips for success:

- ***Roll out the Barrel in spring.*** Wait until after the last frost to install your rain barrel.

- ***Find the Right Rooftop and Downspout.*** Choose a down spout that is close to the area where you want to use the water.

- ***Remember Gravity.*** Your rain barrel will work best if it is slightly uphill of the area where you want to use the water. It is recommended that your barrel be elevated off the ground with cinder blocks to ensure good water pressure from the barrel.

- **Know Your Ground.** Make sure the ground beneath the selected downspout is solid and level. When filled, the rain barrel will weigh about 400 pounds and you don't want it to tip over. Gravel, wooden boards or concrete slabs can be used to create a firm base beneath the rain barrel.

Installing Your Rain Barrel:

Unwrap the packaging and remove the screen and spigot from inside the rain barrel. Screw the spigot onto the barrel until the hex-shaped face touches the barrel (*Optional: Wrap the threads of the spigot with some Teflon tape before screwing it into the barrel*). Adjust the spigot to a useful position. Raise the rain barrel by placing it on concrete blocks. This will allow the water to drain better and also raise the barrel up so that a watering can may be placed under the spigot.

Using Your Rain Barrel:

After it rains, let it drain!

Having an empty rain barrel will allow you to catch even more rain in the next rainstorm.

If your rain barrel is already filled to capacity when it rains, all of the new rain will overflow out of the barrel. Although having a full rain barrel at the start of a new rain storm is not a problem, you'll be able to capture a greater proportion of the rainwater that falls on the rooftop and make good use of it around your lawn and garden if you have emptied your barrel ahead of time.

Only keep your rain barrel filled when a period of dry weather is expected.

Let the Water Soak In:

A great way to use the water in your rain barrel is to attach a soaker hose to the outlet spigot at the bottom of your barrel. Soaker hoses have tiny holes that slowly release water. This is a great way to gradually empty your rain barrel and water your garden when you know you will be away from home for a few days. Soaker hoses can be purchased at local hardware or garden supply stores.

Do Not Drink Rain Barrel Water:

The water you catch in your rain barrel should not be consumed by humans or pets and should only be used to water lawns and gardens. Although your rain barrel is made of plastic, bacteria and other chemicals may still enter from the rooftop into the water. While rain barrels are used in other countries as a source of drinking water, they are equipped with filtration devices to make the water safe for human consumption.

Use Caution When Using Rain Water in Vegetable Gardens:

Studies have shown that harmful chemicals may leach from the following rooftop materials:

- Treated cedar shakes
- New wood shingles
- Asphalt shingles
- Copper
- Rooftops treated with chemicals to prevent algae/lichen./moss growth
- Rooftops treated with chromate copper arsenate

- Gutters containing lead solder or lead- based paint

Check your rooftop materials before watering your vegetable garden with water collected in a rain barrel.

Rain Barrel Maintenance:

Make sure the screen is always tightly secured so that no mosquitoes, rodents or debris gets inside. Patch any holes in the mesh screen. Look inside the barrel: Algae growth and pollen deposits inside the barrel are normal. If the algae or pollen are bothersome to you, clean out the barrel.

Cleaning: Unless a lot of debris is collecting inside your rain barrel or there is bothersome algae growth, a rain barrel really only needs to be cleaned when it is brought inside for the winter or before it is reinstalled in the spring. To clean your rain barrel, use vinegar or soap and water and spray it out with your hose.

Overflow: if you are home during a storm, go outside to check that water is being diverted away from the house and that the barrel is not overflowing. If you notice your rain barrel is always over flowing it may be a sign that the rooftop being drained from the down-spout is yielding too much water for the barrel to handle, or, perhaps that the rain barrel diverter has been installed too high. If the overflowing barrel becomes a problem, reinstall the barrel onto a smaller section of rooftop or add a second or third rain barrel.

Leaks: Check all hose and spigot connections for leaks. Use plumbing Goop to seal any leaks from hardware on the barrel.

3 Easy Steps to Winterize

- Disconnect the downspout from the rain barrel, and re-connect a downspout extension to the main downspout to funnel water away from the foundation of the house.
- Empty the rain barrel.
- Flip the rain barrel upside-down and store it outside, or, if you have room, move the rain barrel into a garage or basement

We look forward to continuing our effort to make environmental stewardship a part of the fabric of North Hempstead.

Questions? Call 311 or outside of the town

call 516-869-6311